

Army Fixed-Wing Fleet

What is it?

Unlike other platforms, the Army fixed-wing fleet is combined due to its size and the diversity of aircraft and missions. Currently the Army has multiple fixed-wing aircraft to include C-12/RC-12 (Hawker Beech King Air), C-20 (Gulfstream III,IV) C-23 (Sherpa), C-26 (Metro-liner), EO-5 (Dehavilland DHC-7), and C-37 (Gulfstream V,550) to name the most common. Army fixed-wing aircraft perform a myriad of missions, from personnel, light cargo and executive level transport to military intelligence operations.

What has Army Aviation Done?

The fixed-wing fleet has led the way in development of the intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) arena, providing the Warfighter with immediate intelligence to conduct the battle and protect the force in the current fight. Cargo aircraft have provided immeasurable assistance to the Warfighter by providing mission-critical supplies to outlying areas of operations in a timely manner, thus completing that “last tactical mile” of supply. In the utility transport area, fixed-wing aircraft continue to provide the timely and mission-critical transport of key personnel to and from the area of operations that only this diverse and nimble fleet can provide.

What continued efforts does Army Aviation have planned for the future?

Given the decision in April 2009 to transfer the C-27J program and the direct support mission it supports to the Air Force, Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) is in the process of developing a new Fixed-Wing Utility (FUA) Initial Capabilities Document (ICD) to determine the current and future requirements for the Army’s fixed-wing fleet. This ICD will allow the Army to procure fixed-wing utility platforms that are better suited to the operational environment of today and the future, characterized by an extended operational area, austere airstrips and the proliferation of Infra-Red Man-Portable Air Defense System (MANPADS). Since the Army’s current fixed-wing utility fleet is anticipated to remain airworthy through 2025, it is not in immediate need of replacement. The Army will continue to maintain the current fleet and update the civil and military avionics as required to support world-wide operations. However, the FUA requirements documentation will allow the Army to procure more capable aircraft as fixed-wing platforms are retired or attrited. The FUA ICD, when approved, will be followed by an Analysis of Alternatives to determine the specific capabilities needed and make recommendations on the fleet size and composition.

Why is this important to the Army and Army Aviation?

Diversity. Army Aviation needs a fleet of multiple Fixed Wing and Rotary Wing (FW/RW) platforms to support Army requirements. FW aircraft are capable of supporting unique transport, sustainment and ISR requirements, and should be used to reduce the operations tempo (OPTEMPO) on the RW fleet. The question could be asked “...if not the fixed-wing fleet, then what?” The RW fleet is fully engaged in the war fight. Army Aviation needs the FW fleet to alleviate those roles that it can so that the RW fleet can continue to support the Warfighters.

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